



Representing the communities of Agoura, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Encino, Hidden Hills, Lake Sherwood, Malibu, Oak Park, Pacific Palisades, Port Hueneme, portions of Sherman Oaks, portions of Oxnard, Santa Monica, Tarzana, Topanga, portions of Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills

**SEPTEMBER 2010**

## **Day 90 and Still No Budget.**

The legislative Democrats have had a responsible and balanced California Jobs Budget on the table for weeks. Yet, again, the constitutional requirement of approval by a 2/3 supermajority to pass a budget has set up the annual partisan roadblock by the Republican minority.

In the meantime, over \$3 billion in payments that California owes to vendors who have done work for the state, and payments to some of the most vulnerable people in our population are being withheld. CalWORKS (sometimes referred to as welfare to work), Supplemental Security Income/SSP, In-Home Supportive Services, and the Regional Centers that provide such critical services to the developmentally disabled are all at serious risk. People are suffering real harm.

As Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, I am particularly angry at the damage being caused to our school children by this partisan refusal to negotiate a solution in good faith, including finally to end the exemption that we continue to give to giant oil companies from paying the extraction tax they pay in every other oil-producing state. We have already slashed education funding by \$17 billion in just the past two years. This cannot continue. We risk losing an entire generation of students – more than six million in K-12 – when we don't fulfill our obligation to provide them a first class education.

Attached is a link to my remarks on the Assembly Floor when the budget was being debated. In the meantime, please bring whatever influence you have to bear on my Republican colleagues. The stakes have risen too high for this to go on.



<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a41/Pressroom/Video/budget.aspx>

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## Plastic Bag Bill Beaten Back by American Chemistry Council's Army of Lobbyists

But the fight is far from over. On August 30, after the halls of the Capitol building were virtually impassable because of the crush of lobbyists for the American Chemistry Council, enough votes were picked off in the Senate so that my bill, AB1998, failed passage on a 14-21 vote.



This was a sad day for California. Communities across the state were waiting for the state to adopt a uniform, statewide ban on single-use bags to avoid having to adopt local ordinances piecemeal. The state failed them. Instead, shoppers in California will encounter a confusing array of bag bans and restrictions that will vary from city to city and county to county. To avoid this, the California Grocers Association, the United Food and Commercial Workers, the California Labor Federation, the California Retailers Association, counties and cities across the state, and a long list of other business groups had supported AB 1998. The Governor had stated his readiness to sign the bill.

Four California cities already have bans in place: San Francisco, Palo Alto, Fairfax and Malibu. Los Angeles County, and the City of Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Manhattan Beach are preparing their own ordinances. Mexico City has already adopted its own ban.

Nations with bans already in place include China, India, Bangladesh, Ireland and South Africa. California can and should lead the United States in doing no less.

AB 1998 would have banned single-use carryout bags beginning in 2012 for supermarkets and pharmacies, and in 2013 for liquor stores and convenience stores. It would have allowed stores to give away reusable bags free, and would have insured that shoppers who forget their own bags would have been able to buy reusable bags at the stores, including recycled paper bags of 40 percent post-consumer material at cost, estimated at about 5¢.

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Stores would have been required to provide reusable or recycled paper bags to shoppers who cannot afford them.

AB 1998 promoted new green jobs for reusable bag makers, and would have established a grant and loan program from existing state funds to retain jobs in California for the manufacture of reusable bags. A grocery store recycling program for plastic bags that currently is in place would have been extended under the legislation.

So the fight is definitely not over. Marine debris has injured or killed 267 species worldwide, with plastics the main problem. Plastic bags have been found in the stomachs of whales, birds and sea turtles, who mistake them for jellyfish. The bags also contribute to the great Pacific Gyre, a shameful floating island of our plastic garbage that is now twice the size of Texas.

The American Chemistry Council should not rest easy.

## **Time for Boeing Company to Join Historic Cleanup Agreement with the State**

Just over 50 years ago, an uncontained partial nuclear meltdown occurred at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory in the Chatsworth Hills, with radioactive releases that the Department of Energy, NASA and Rocketdyne, the site operators, kept secret from the public and regulators for decades. A third of the core melted, power rose uncontrollably, and fuel temperatures shot up to the level that the fuel rods lost their integrity and released massive amounts of radioactivity into the air.

Later revelations uncovered more accidents in at least four of the ten nuclear reactors and a long list of dangerous activities and disposal practices that have left the site both radioactively and chemically contaminated to this day. The accident has been compared to the Three Mile Island catastrophe, and may actually have been worse.

In 2007, then-State Senator Sheila Kuehl and I, as joint authors, succeeded in getting legislation signed into law – SB990 – setting a very high standard for cleanup of the site. The great news is that the Department of Energy and NASA have just reached agreement with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control to clean up the site to background levels – one of the highest levels of cleanup of any contaminated site in the country, exceeding SB990.

Regrettably, the Boeing Company, current owner of the site, has fought tooth and nail to overturn SB990 from the day it passed. Last year they brought in the lawyers and filed suit to overturn SB990 entirely.

On September 8, I invited a number of the elected officials who have been critical partners in this work to get the site cleaned up to meet me at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site.

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*right-left: L.A. City Councilman Greig Smith, community advocate Daniel Hirsch, Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, Congressman Brad Sherman, Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks*

We hand-delivered a letter to James McNerney, Chairman, President and CEO of The Boeing Company, signed by each of us, asking him to do two things:

1. Dismiss Boeing's lawsuit against the state attacking SB990, and accept responsibility for cleanup;
2. Join the DOE and NASA and sign a new SB990-compliant cleanup order with the state that will finally clean up all of the contaminated site for the ultimate protection of the health and safety of the people we represent.

It's time for Boeing to call off their lawyers and for the cleanup to begin. And for restoration of the environmental health and beauty of this site that has been so ravaged and blighted by decades of reckless industrial activities. Once cleaned up, I hope that its future will be as the next jewel in California's public park system.

## **13 Bills Signed or on Governor's Desk**

Although the plastic bag bill consumed much of the media oxygen for months, 13 other of my bills were passed out of the Legislature, three of which the Governor has already signed into law.

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**AJR 19 – Defense of Marriage Act**

Calls on the U.S. Congress and the President to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which denies same-sex couples married in California access to roughly 1,000 federal rights and benefits accorded to other married couples.

**AB 139 – Offsite Board Meetings**

Authorizes county boards of supervisors to meet in different locations around the county, rather than only at the county seat, so residents and other stakeholders have easier access to their elected representatives.

Signed by the Governor.

**ACR 145 – Clean and Healthy Schools**

Recognized April 26, 2010 as California Healthy Schools Day, and encouraged schools to improve indoor air quality, lower cleaning costs, and safeguard health by switching to independently certified green cleaning products.

**AB 572 – Charter Schools Conflict of Interest**

Requires charter school governing boards to adopt and comply with a conflict of interest policy similar to ones governing traditional school district boards. The bill was prompted by audits revealing fraud and financial mismanagement by some charter school operators.

**AB 1374 – Adult Education Credentials**

Streamlines requirements for the Preliminary and Clear Designated Subjects Adult Education teaching credential, making it easier for candidates to become adult education teachers.

Signed by the Governor.

**AB 1933 – Foster Care School of Origin**

Grants an extension of time for foster children to remain in their school of origin when placed with a family in a different neighborhood, provided it is determined to be in the best interest of the child.

**AB 2081 – Omnibus Education Bill**

Makes various technical non-controversial revisions to the Education Code to delete obsolete references and language, resolve conflicts, correct technical errors and oversights, and update references.

Signed by the Governor.

**AB 2084 – Child Nutrition**

Requires licensed child care facilities to provide healthy beverages by offering water at every meal and throughout the day, by providing only one percent milk or non-fat milk to children ages 2 and older, and by limiting fruit juice to 100% juice once a day.

**AB 2229 – CPS Investigations**

Ensures that children's safety comes first when public protection agencies respond to emergency reports of child abuse. It reduces from three to two the number of investigative team members required to share confidential information and allows them to consult by phone or electronically.

**AB 2297 – Non-resident/foreign student fees**

Gives community colleges greater authority to charge non-residents a fee that better reflects the cost of their education. Enables colleges to improve the quality of education for all students.

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### **AB 2394 – Ministerial Acts**

Streamlines the courts' civil processes through the use of current technology, providing the state and counties potential savings of millions of dollars. The bill is the first step toward promoting a paperless model of civil law enforcement.

### **AB 2554 – Flood Control**

Authorizes Los Angeles County to ask voters living in the County Flood Control District if they wish to pay a property-related user fee to raise funds for projects addressing pollution from storm water and urban runoff.

### **AB 2560 – Bond Tax Credit**

Authorizes the California Department of Education and the California School Finance Authority to allocate \$720 million in federal Qualified School Construction Bond (QSCB) tax credits to local educational agencies and charter schools, saving education dollars while creating new jobs.

## **Visit to Woodland Hills Academy**

I was pleased to have the opportunity to join my colleague, Assemblymember Bob Blumenfield and others in the community at an open house at Woodland Hills Academy



("WHA"). This is a middle school that embarked on a transformation in 2006, converting to an "Expanded School-Based Management Model." This shift has resulted in site-based management through its Leadership Council, innovative staffing, new course scheduling, increased course offerings, and improved test scores (API 783 – a 20 point jump).

also have a Photography Lab, which I enjoyed touring. And I had the chance to speak with the very passionate AVID teacher, who also teaches a wonderful cooking course.

It was interesting to learn more about the strong academic programs offered at WHA. They

## **Resource Conservation Award**

I was very honored to receive the California Resource Recovery Association's 2010 *Resource Conservation Award* last month, recognizing my leadership in resource conservation through the fight to make AB1998 state law. CRRRA's annual conference is the premier recycling event in California, bringing together over 500 professionals engaged in reuse, recycling, composting, extended producer responsibility, and recyclable materials market development.

-More-



***In Memoriam  
Ronald P. Schafer***

*On September 15, Ron Schafer, Superintendent of the Angeles District of California State Parks, passed away suddenly after suffering a stroke just a few days prior. This is a sad and profound loss for all who knew and thought so highly of him. Ron oversaw 18 state park units, most of them in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in my Assembly District. Known for his geniality, wry humor, and passion for our beautiful nature resources, he was also visionary manager who leveraged scarce park dollars through a series of creative partnerships with other park agencies that were made possible by the strong working relationships that he forged. I join in extending my most sincere condolences to Ron's family and loved ones. He will be greatly missed.*

***Committee and Legislative Appointments***

Chair, Assembly Education Committee  
Chair, Select Committee on Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Chair, Select Committee on Cleanup of Santa Susana Field Laboratory

Member:

Assembly Budget Committee  
Assembly Judiciary Committee  
Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
Budget Subcommittee #2 – Education Finance  
Budget Subcommittee #4 – State Administration  
Select Committee on Community Colleges  
Select Committee on Domestic Violence  
Select Committee on Improving State Government  
Select Committee on Lowering California's High School Dropout Rates  
Select Committee on Ports  
Joint Select Committee on Reform  
Member, State Allocation Board  
California Commission on the Status of Women  
Legislative Liaison, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission  
Legislative Participant, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

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